



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 5, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

As you know, the House is expected to consider an omnibus appropriations bill in September, and among the amendments that have been filed are ones that prohibit the use of taxpayer funding by the Administration for certain purposes. Many Americans wish to see Congress exercise its Constitutional authority to place constraints on the current Administration by prohibiting activities the Congress opposes. Under the previous Administration, Congress regularly offered and adopted amendments to appropriations bills to add language prohibiting the use of appropriated funds for specific purposes it deemed inappropriate. Members ought to be permitted to continue to offer these kinds of amendments this year and have the opportunity for the Congress to either adopt or reject them as has been done in previous Congresses.

For example, Members deserve the opportunity to offer amendments that would prevent the Trump Administration from using any allocated taxpayer funding to undermine the implementation of the Affordable Care Act or intentionally destabilize health care markets. Neither should we permit this Justice Department to use taxpayer funds to weaken the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. A further example would be restricting or eliminating funding for ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program or deporting those who registered under it.

From providing that funds not be used for the transfer of detainees at Guantanamo Bay to limits on the use of funding for the implementation of immigration and health care policies, your Majority used funding limitation amendments to prevent the Obama Administration from taking actions with which it disagreed. To deny the House an opportunity to use this same tool to keep the Trump Administration in check would constitute a double-standard.

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I hope that, in the interest of promoting the regular order you have often said you favor, you will ask the Rules Committee to make in order these sorts of amendments so that the House can work its will on these important policy matters. As we have seen over the past several weeks, the importance of Congress's role in holding the present Administration accountable and providing proper oversight and limits cannot be overstated. I hope the Majority and Minority can work together to ensure that regular order enables all Members to have a hand in shaping our appropriations bills and that we can work together to preserve Congress's role in our system of checks and balances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steny Hoyer", with a large, stylized initial "S" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

STENY H. HOYER